

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected the application on various bases. In response thereto, Applicant has amended the application so as to overcome the rejections of the Examiner. Care has been taken not to introduce any new matter into the application.

The Examiner has rejected claim 61 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph based on the contention that the claim states that the collar is a “molded polymer” but the specification does not explicitly state the same. In response thereto, Applicant has amended claim 61 to state a “pre-formed plastics” member instead of “molded polymer.” The pre-formed plastics terminology is located in a plurality of locations, including paragraph [0316] of the application as published.

Applicant thanks the Examiner and his supervisor for their assistance relative to this application during the telephone call of Monday, October 5, 2009. Applicant submits that during the telephone conference, the substance of the amendment with respect to claim 49 was discussed in addition to the amendment to claim 51. Applicant and the Examiners agreed that as amended, the claims define over the prior art references of record. Additionally, the language added to claim 51 further assists in clarifying the “c” shaped terminology of the claim.

The Examiner has rejected claims 49-53, 56 and 58-60 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,637,623 issued to Muise et al. The Examiner has further rejected claims 54, 55, 57 and 61 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘623 patent in view of U.S. Pat. No. 3,599,840 issued to Speas.

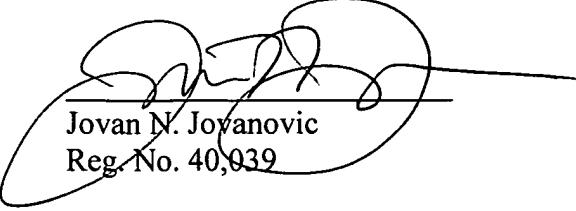
Applicant, with the agreement of the Examiner, submits that the claims as presently amended overcome the rejections identified above. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the pending rejections, and, in turn, passage thereof to allowance.

Applicant respectfully requests a three month extension of time. A PTO-2038 has been

included for any fee associated with the two month extension of time.

Should anything further be required, a telephone call to the undersigned at (616) 797-1000 is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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